

### *Congressman Secured \$210,000 in Federal Funding for Initiative, Which Will Allow Young Adults to Earn their GEDs and Learn Construction Skills while Rehabilitating Housing in Newburgh*

*Newburgh, NY* - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today helped kick-off Habitat for Humanity of Greater Newburgh's new Youth Build program -- an initiative that will allow young adults to earn their General Educational Development (GED) degrees while also learning construction skills as they rehabilitate housing in Newburgh. As part of the fiscal year 2009 budget, Hinchey obtained \$210,000 from Congress for the project, which will also expand the supply of affordable housing for low-income families.

"This program is a win-win for the community and everyone involved," Hinchey said. "The participants in this program will come away from this experience with a GED degree, new skills that will help them obtain future employment in the construction industry, and the satisfaction of knowing they helped to give back to their community by renovating a property that will now become a home for three Newburgh families in need of help. The entire Newburgh community is benefitting from this program by having a more educated and skilled population, more affordable housing for residents, and a more unified community. I was very pleased to secure the federal funding needed for this program to get off the ground and look forward to seeing the positive impact that it will have for everyone."

The Youth Build initiative being kicked off today by Habitat for Humanity of Greater Newburgh is a pilot program that will train young people, aged 17-24 in construction skills. The program's goal is to help these young adults develop skills that will enable them to secure jobs in the future while completing their GED high school equivalency program, and helping to rehabilitate three transitional housing units for very-low income families.

Ten students have been recruited to enter the full-time, 40 week long training program. The program sought out young adults who were high school dropouts but wanted to obtain a GED and also expressed a desire to learn the construction trade.

Best Resources, a workforce training support service led by Vera Best, will provide GED tutelage, testing, live skills classes and individualized case management. Students will spend three mornings each week for 40 weeks at Best Resources. Laborers Local #17, LECET will

provide supervision and training to the Youth Build participants for 10 hours per week. Local #17 will provide OSHA training certifications, CPR training, lead and asbestos training, safety coursework and concrete and masonry training, as well as supervise the actual construction training on site.

The recruits will be assigned class space at the Habitat Kimball Building, which has offices, workshop, and conference room space and is adjacent to the building project at 6 Federal Street. That property will be renovated for three units for very-low income families, and is contiguous to the Habitat/Leyland E. Parmenter Street neighborhood development. The program will serve as a model for future training of inner city youth.